
Environmental Advisory Council
Wednesday, December 28, 2011

The regular meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council was held on the above date for the transaction of general business.

EAC members present – R. Nieves, H. Rauenzahn, A. Molteni

Others present – S. Katzenmoyer, D. Hoag

CALL TO ORDER

Harriet Rauenzahn called the meeting to order at 5:40 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

BERNHART PARK UPDATE

Ms. Hoag stated that there is not much of an update at this time. She stated that EPA recently received a letter from Farino regarding the installation of the fence. She stated that Farino is gaining financially from the sale of the property and that the City makes no financial gain. She stated that in order to place the fence in the park, trees would need to be removed. Discussions on this issue will continue.

Mr. Nieves questioned if the grass was growing. Ms. Hoag stated that it is coming in well.

RAIN BARREL WORKSHOP

Ms. Hoag reported that the committee met on December 7. Mr. Beane found a sample ordinance that was enacted recently which addresses rain barrels only and not rain harvesting. She stated that Mr. Beane will be drafting an ordinance for review.

Mr. Nieves questioned if the ordinance would be common sense and not heavily regulated. Ms. Hoag stated that it would.

Ms. Rauenzahn questioned the workshop. Ms. Hoag stated that the workshop has not yet been addressed by the committee.

BCTV PROGRAM

Ms. Rauenzahn reported that Kate O'Brien will be the guest of the February show.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Nieves moved, seconded by Mr. Molteni, to approve the November 22, 2011 minutes as written.

REORGANIZATION

Ms. Rauenzahn stated that she is resigning from the EAC effective December 31, 2011. She stated that she will continue working on the BCTV program until August.

Mr. Molteni stated that this would bring the number of vacant seats to three. Ms. Katzenmoyer agreed.

Mr. Molteni suggested reorganizing at the January meeting. Ms. Hoag questioned if this would be possible as the chair has resigned. Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that it was possible and would be the first order of business.

SMART GROWTH ALLIANCE

Mr. Nieves stated that he has submitted Evergreen Community Power as a nominee for a green business. He requested that members submit additional nominations as they learn of them.

Mr. Beane joined the meeting via phone at this time.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Mr. Beane reported that he is a member of the Mayor-elect's "green team" and that the focus has been on sustainability in relation to the environment and to job creation. He stated that an initiative of the Mayor-elect is a "green zone" for green industrial jobs. He stated that several businesses have been approached to locate to the "green zone" and that the former Glidden site is a priority location. This site has environmental issues.

Mr. Beane stated that in addition, the EAC may wish to begin to review how the City's current codes may impede future "green" and sustainability issues.

Ms. Rauenzahn questioned if there would be a focus on converting buildings to green energy. Mr. Beane stated that this is on the committee's agenda for 2012. He stated that an energy efficiency inventory will be completed and that this committee will be looking to cooperate with the School District. The Mayor-elect is aware of the project at Kutztown University.

Ms. Rauenzahn questioned if Noresco has been contacted. Mr. Beane stated that they will be contacted in the future. He noted that many projects depend on the sustainability position being added to the Mayor's office. He noted that this is a big opportunity for the EAC.

Ms. Rauenzahn questioned who would be placed in this position. Mr. Beane stated that he did not have this information. He stated that Mr. Spencer feels very strongly about establishing this position. *Note: the recommendation for this staff person is Eron Lloyd.*

Ms. Hoag stated that energy efficiency also means financial savings to the City.

Mr. Beane stated that it is hoped that jobs will also be created through bringing the green industry to Reading. He stated that the full agenda has not yet been made public.

FLOODPLAIN/STORM WATER

Ms. Hoag reported that the City has recently received a response from FEMA regarding the flood plan and has been granted access to the Flood Insurance Rating maps. She stated that she needs to review this information in detail but that these issues should be able to be addressed quickly.

EAC VACANCIES

Mr. Beane stated that he has been reaching out to members of the "green team" to serve on the EAC. He stated that he is also reaching out to other potential members.

Ms. Hoag reminded the EAC that all appointments are made by City Council. Mr. Beane stated that this is true but that applicants do not need to be recommended by Council members - they ultimately approve candidates however.

Mr. Molteni noted the need to begin looking at environmental issues on a regional basis and that the Reading EAC should be reaching out to other County EACs.

BUSHONG DAM

Mr. Molteni questioned if this dam has been visited recently. Ms. Hoag stated that she did visit recently. She reported that a tree has come down and is causing problems as it's in the water and will be difficult to remove. She stated that the tree is diverting much water through the race and may be causing other safety issues. She stated that she will be revisiting the site in the near future after the water level has decreased.

STEEP SLOPE/RIPARIAN BUFFER

Ms. Katzenmoyer stated that she has done some limited research on these issues and found sample ordinances enacted in Pennsylvania. She also stated that she recently attended a Zoning Roundtable where these issues were discussed. Many local municipalities are beginning to address these items through zoning overlay zones.

OTHER

Mr. Nieves stated that he has applied for the position of Council President.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

The next meeting of the Environmental Advisory Council will be held on Tuesday, January 24 at 5:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by
Shelly Katzenmoyer
Deputy City Clerk